

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8351

S E C R E T MANILA 11493

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBINSON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP(ROBINSON, C.W.)

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF MILITARY BASE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: MANILA 11304

1. REFTEL CONVEYED MY MOST RECENT ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF OUR MILITARY BASE NEGOTIATIONS. YOU WILL SEE FROM THIS ASSESSMENT THAT I BELIEVE WE HAVE REACHED THE END OF OUR NEGOTIATING OPTIONS AT THE CURRENT LEVEL AND IN THE CURRENT SESSIONS. BOTH SIDES PRETTY WELL KNOW WHAT CAN BE SETTLED FOR AND WHAT ADJUSTMENTS IN POSITION HAVE TO BE MADE IN ORDER TO REACH THAT SETTLEMENT. IF THERE IS A MUTUAL WILL TO HAVE A NEW AGREEMENT, ONE CAN BE CONCLUDED.

2. THE BASIC PROBLEM, OF COURSE, REVOLVES AROUND THE QUID PRO QUO. WE DO NOT YET HAVE AUTHORITY FROM WASHINGTON TO TABLE ANY FIGURE FOR THE QUID AND THE FILIPINOS HAVE SHOWN NO URGENCY IN PUSHING US FOR SUCH A FIGURE, OR IN PROPOSING A FIGURE OF THEIR OWN. THIS LEADS ME TO CONCLUDE THAT MARCOS WISHES TO GO VERY SLOWLY AT THIS STAGE UNTIL HE KNOWS MORE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL CLIMATE IN

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WASHINGTON.

3. HE WOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT WHICH MIGHT BE REJECTED BY THE CONGRESS, BUT WOULD ALSO BE RELUCTANT TO CONCLUDE ON WHICH WOULD CONTAIN FEATURES THAT MIGHT PERMIT THE CONGRESS TO ATTACH CONDITIONS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION. SINCE HE IS VULNERABLE TO ACCUSATIONS OF AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT AND SUPPRESSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS, HE PROBABLY EXPECTS THAT A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS WOULD GIVE HIM DIFFICULTIES ON THIS SCORE IF AN AGREEMENT IS SUBMITTED BY A REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION. HE FURTHER PROBABLY CONSIDERS THAT A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION MIGHT NOT EVEN AGREE TO SUBMIT AN AGREEMENT OF THIS SORT TO THE CONGRESS.

4. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE FILIPINOS WOULD WELCOME A RECESS UNTIL AFTER THE UNITED STATES ELECTIONS. I HAVE REFRAINED FROM PROPOSING SUCH AN IDEA, PARTLY BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOUR VISIT HERE MIGHT PROVIDE THE CATALYST FOR BRINGING ABOUT A RECESS GRACEFULLY. THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS IN SUCH A DIRECTION FROM THE FILIPINO SIDE BUT THEY, TOO, ARE PRESUMABLY WAITING UNTIL PRESIDENT MARCOS SPEAKS ON THE SUBJECT.

5. THEREFORE, AN LOGICAL OUTCOME OF YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH MARCOS WOULD SEEM TO BE AN AGREED ARRANGEMENT FOR A GRACEFUL RECESS. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY INVOLVE CONSOLIDATING THE TEXTS THAT WE NOW HAVE INTO A SINGLE DOCUMENT WITH THE POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT BRACKETED THEREIN. IN TERMS OF TYPES PAGES, THIS EFFORT WOULD DEMONSTRATE A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT. IN SUBSTANTIVE TERMS IT WOULD INDICATE THAT WE ARE STILL FAR APART ON MANY SIGNIFICANT POINTS, AS OUTLINED IN REFTTEL.

6. I BELIEVE THE CONVERSATION WITH MARCOS CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY STEERED TO THIS CONCLUSION AND WOULD URGE YOU TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN THE CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM ON AUGUST 6.
SULLIVAN

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